

VZCZCXRO9583
RR RUEHDBU RUEHLN RUEHPOD RUEHSK RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHMO #1764 1891451
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 081451Z JUL 09
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4176
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 2232

UNCLAS MOSCOW 001764

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [KIRF](#) [SOCI](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCH KIRILL PROPOSES
STRONGER TIES BETWEEN U.S. AND RUSSIA

¶1. (SBU) Summary. In advance of the July 6-8 visit to Moscow by President Obama, Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill welcomed stronger ties between the U.S. and Russia and proposed a religious component to international peace negotiations. Kirill also pressed for a private meeting with the President during his visit. The two did have a brief meeting on the margins of the luncheon hosted by President Medvedev. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Patriarch Kirill hosted Ambassador on July 3 at his working residence on Chistiye Lane in central Moscow. Accompanying the Patriarch in the meeting were the Head of the Secretariat of the Moscow Patriarchate for Parishes and Organizations Abroad Bishop Mark of Yegorevsky, Deputy Chairman of the Department for External Relations Archpriest Nicholas Balashov, Acting Secretary for Issues Concerning the Far-Abroad Nations Priest Sergey Zvonarev, and Orthodox Church of America Representative to the Moscow Patriarchate Archimandrite Zacchaeus. Against the backdrop of the upcoming July 6-8 Presidential Summit and the Patriarch's historical meeting with Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew, the Patriarch welcomed stronger ties between the United States and Russia. He stressed that commonalities outnumber the differences between the peoples of the United States and Russia, and he expressed appreciation for continued and friendly cooperation of the countries' respective religious communities.

¶3. (SBU) Kirill expressed sincere interest in facilitating the integration of "new Russians" into American culture. The Patriarch stated that Russian Orthodox missionaries brought Orthodoxy to the United States, a feat that paved the way for relations between Orthodox believers and those of other religions. However, he noted that many former citizens of Russia and other FSU countries had experienced difficulty in adapting to life in the United States, and he hoped that the United States Government would be supportive of the efforts of the Orthodox Church of America (OCA) to help mitigate that adjustment. He also noted that many former Soviet citizens, often incorrectly labeled as a "Russian mafia," no longer maintain ties to the ROC, but that these people should not be characterized as stereotypical of all Russian-speaking people.

¶4. (SBU) Kirill told the Ambassador about a proposal, jointly conceived with one of the Chief Rabbis of Israel, that would provide a helpful religious component to international peace negotiations. Commenting that conflicts in numerous hot spots around the world persist with great social and religious tension, Kirill believed that international peace negotiators should cede some responsibilities to religious leaders, who could use their expertise in conflict resolution. Kirill added that many Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and Christian leaders supported the idea, and that he had already discussed it with United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. He hoped that either a prominent Christian or Jewish leader from the United States

would join the ranks of supporters, and mentioned that Appeal of Conscience Foundation Director Arthur Schneier already backed the concept.

15. (SBU) Keenly interested in proving his equal stature with Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew, who met with President Obama in Istanbul, Kirill pressed Ambassador to secure a meeting with POTUS during his July 6-8 visit. While acknowledging the hectic nature of President Obama's schedule, Kirill saw a potential meeting as a true opportunity to show that there is social and cultural cooperation between Russia and the United States. The Patriarch had requested a private meeting in the weeks leading up to the Obama-Medvedev summit in Moscow, and ultimately met with POTUS briefly following an official luncheon at the Kremlin on July 7.
BEYRL